THE

BRITISH TOCSIN;

OR,

PROOFS

OF

NATIONAL RUIN.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by DANIEL ISAAC EATON, Printer and Bookfeller to the Supreme Majefty of the People, at the COCK AND SWINE, No. 74, Newgate-ftreet.

1795.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

INTRODUCTION.

TO follow Truth is to do every thing that is required; and if there were not ſome truths, whereof it is neceſſary that Britons ſhould be informed, this work would never have been preſented to the world.

The jargon of courts, and the ſophiſtry of prieſts, have ſo often miſled the general mind, that it is neceſſary plain truth and common ſenſe ſhould at laſt create a revolution in the human heart, and make the receſſes of intellect the receptacles of civic virtue. Happily for the world, the period is arrived that neither quotation or precedent bias the writers of the day; modern genius appears emulous of originality, and acts independantly from its own feelings; by this means, the intellectual eye diſcovers beauties unobſerved before, and principles and virtues vegitate into being, nurtured only by the rays of nature.

If, therefore, in this tract, ideas and axioms ſhould be produced novel to the received opini-

ons of men, let them be conſidered before they are condemned. I write from my heart—and the warmth of feeling may exceed the boundaries of prudence—but as a Man, I have a right to enjoy my native ſentiments, and, as a Citizen, it is my duty to communicate them.

To my country then I commit my thoughts, a ſtranger to thoſe bleſſings which lull the boſom into apathy, unpoſſeſſed of riches, and uncontaminated by the pride which they inſpire; poſſeſſed of no other heritage, than that which nature has univerſally beſtowed on man, I would wiſh to converſe with my country as with my friend; and with my countrymen reciprocally receive and return the advantages of reflection.

Britain is on the brink of ruin—it is not the vain dreams of politicians, or the idle malevolence of parties that vociferate, or create this idea; it is founded on fact, and the daily contemplation of men corroborates the aſſertion. Deceitful pictures have been drawn by the dependants upon power of the flouriſhing ſtate of our country, notwithſtanding the effects, unavoidably produced by a continuation of war, but experience is the beſt reply to their inſinuations;—the ſoldierized mechanic, the ſtarving peaſant, and the deſerted widow, are living proteſts againſt the veracity of their reports.

What

What are the ſymptoms of national ruin? Corruption and diſtreſs, walking hand in hand through the country; and war eternally compleating the triumvirate of deſpotiſm. In arbitrary governments, the people may be ſlaves before they are corrupted; but in countries, which once were free, the people muſt have been corrupted before they were enſlaved: corruption is always the companion of miſery, and both are in their turns the produce and the cauſe of war. Kings, corruption, and miſery, too often originate from national diſſentions, and too often repay the obligation with the falſe gratitude of loyal ſuffering, and glorious deſtruction.

That government is near its end, when having once depended upon the free temper of the people, they endeavour to reign by their own extent of power; it is much eaſier for the people to ſerve the king with chearfulneſs, than for the king to reſtrain the people with diſtruſt;—this jealouſy is the watchword of tyranny's diſſolution, it is the token of diſunion between the monarch and the nation, and in the termination of the affair the nation generally acts for itſelf.

There was a period, when the diſcontent of a nation was directed againſt the miniſterial puppets of the day; the ſyſtem was imagined to be good, though the men who conducted it were bad; but

in this day the people believe that ſyſtem to be erroneous which permits bad men to ruin the country, without poſſeſſing the power of puniſhing the individual, and of remedying the evil. The nation acts upon a larger ſcale, and it applies the evils complained of to the frailty of the ſyſtem, rather than of the man. Principle has ſucceeded to party, and the judgment of the country deprecates the continual ſtruggle between men, whoſe virtue is deceit, and whoſe patriotiſm is ambition. When nations aſſume the faculty of thinking for themſelves, individual intereſt is ſwallowed in the accumulating maſs of public ſpirit; and the meanneſs of party is derided into the glorious urbanity of the citizen.

To theſe opinions, therefore, founded on experience, and aggravated by diſappointment, may be attributed the expected failure of that ſyſtem, which has hitherto been deemed the glory of the Britiſh nation; but the opinions of men work ſlowly, their progreſs is imperceptible and tedious, though their ſucceſs is certain. Other circumſtances have accelerated the downfall of the Britiſh ſyſtem, and the abuſes of a conſtitution have been the cauſes of its ruin.

Perhaps no country in the univerſe ever preſented to the obſervation of the citizen a more melancholy picture than Britain at this preſent moment;

ment; but the ruin of countries which pretend to be free, is not viſible upon the ſurface of affairs; it lies buried in the heart of the land, amid the obſcure circles of exiſtence, where ariſtocratical oppreſſion and aſſociation ſmothers in ſecret the honeſt indignation of the ruſtic ſoul. When we look for the miſery which is ſaid to exiſt in England, let us not confine our obſervations to the rich and powerful, for whom alone the Britiſh conſtitution bears the leaſt principle of liberty; let the reſearch be deeper. Great men, and ariſtocratic ſplendour, are vapours which conceal the prevalence of miſery; diſperſe the cloud, and you will find the peaſant cheating his appetite with the rudeſt traſh which nature can digeſt; and the mechanic deploring in ſecret the inſufficiency of his induſtry to ſupply the neceſſities of his being.

Proud of their borrowed luxuries, the rich may libel the patience and reſolution of the poor; but the index to national diſſolution is the inequality of enjoyment. Starvation will bring thoſe to their ſenſes on whom principle has no effect. The ſimpleſt feelings of nature teach men, that luxury is criminal wherever famine is known; and theſe feelings tempt them to terminate the abuſe. In the diſſipation of the rich we ſhall find the inſtruction of the poor; and where a *Pitt* inſults the patient forbearance of a *kingdom*, a patriot ſhall one day

or other receive the heartfelt gratitude of an emancipated *nation.*

Individuals may be hushed into silence, rich men may be coaxed by honours, but when the great body of a country feel, no *hush-money* or *honours*, can quiet their murmurs or steal from the heart of a nation, those dictates which nature has engraven on it. Men learn from necessity the blessings of liberty, the sensation of hunger, enquires from whence that hunger originates, and the continuance of toil obliges man to enquire, who reaps the produce of his labour; thus tyranny itself is the herald of freedom's felicity, and by suffering the evils of famine, pride, and toil, the peasant and the slave, are exalted into men.

Wars in a commercial country may be carried on, and supported for a series of time, by the methods of funding, which have been adopted by the ministers of the three last reigns; but this is only a protraction of ruin, and it is an injustice in principle—it protracts our ruin, because one time or other (provided the system is not discontinued) the profits of national industry will not equal the increase of national indolence which this system occasions, for all funding destroys its own purpose, it swallows up those sums of wealth, and terminates that industrious exertion in the individual, which would otherwise be employed in renovating the exhausted

hauſted powers of the country. Wherever men have a fund where they may depoſit their wealth, and ſubſiſt without exertion, they become the partizans of idle tyranny, and the indolent burthens of of nature, their country, and themſelves. Funding is injuſtice, becauſe it entails upon poſterity the effects of that prodigality and imprudence which they were never guilty of—it is contrary to nature —it obliges the ſon to pay for the criminality of the father, and man no ſooner ſees the fair light of day than he becomes the heir of taxation and tyranny, before he can graſp a pen with his unformed limbs, and before his tongue can give utterance to the dictates of infantine innocence and nature. Whatever is unjuſt, muſt be ruinous, and the injuſtice of funding is one of the principal evils, which ſhakes the Britiſh empire to its baſe.

Thus having briefly and looſely ſtated what I conceive to be the cauſes of the apparent decline too flagrantly witneſſed in the ſtability of our conſtitution, I proceed more largely to expatiate on their effects, and, if poſſible, to form ſome calculation of their reſult. This introduction is more an expoſition of the principles, upon which the following ſentiments are founded, than a full declaration of the ſentiments themſelves. I ſee my country in a perilous ſituation, and I conſider it my duty to point out the cauſes of that peril, leſt in the criſis of the diſeaſe, a remedy ſhould be applied

to

to a wrong part, and the guilty not only be releaſed from the vengeance of inſulted juſtice, but alſo exult in the unmerited ſufferings of the virtue which oppoſed them. The man that erects a directing ſignal, amid the ſtorms of nations, deſerves more praiſe of his country, than the revolutioniſt, who following the cruel mandates of neceſſity, only controuls the thunder of its vengeance.

In an age when curioſity is ever on the purſuit of novelty, political invention ſhould not be neglected; one trait of truth may contribute ſomewhat to the general maſs—amid matter little noticed great principles have often ariſen; and wherever virtue inſcribes the page of manly diſcuſſion, it is the duty of the citizen to peruſe it.

CHAPTER I.

On the Extravagance of the preſent Reign.

A PRODIGAL King is the moſt criminal being upon earth, for no other criminality can be ſo extenſive in its effect, or ſo univerſally felt—it is like a pauper abuſing the benevolence that ſupports him; it is hypocriſy committing a robbery upon charity, and making laws to ſhelter itſelf from the accuſations of nature.

Ambition and avarice are two qualities, which, however oppoſite in their nature, generally mingle in the boſom of a king; but his avarice takes from others, that which ſupplies his own ambition, and the people are the victims of both. A king may be frugal in his houſhold, or orderly in the expenditure of his private income; but if his wars and and nonſenſical quarrels coſt the nation near two hundred millions—where is his frugality, and what can authorize the boaſting eulogiums of his reign? Alas, the people (could they ſpeak their ſentiments) would ſay—O, king, view the diſtreſſes which you inflict upon the nation that ſupports you; *your crown is a burthen, and your reign a ruin.*

I ſpeak of kings that have been—ſuch arguments

cannot

cannot apply to the benificent domination of George III.

The true character of a monarch is not known till the day of his death, it is then that men caſt a ſcrutiny upon his actions, and ſpeak the truth of him that is gone, to flatter the pride of his ſucceſſor. But why ſhould a man *who can do no wrong* be jealous of his character, if this conſtitutional precept be true, his vices muſt be virtues, and his tyranny the moſt perfect freedom. However I may ſpeak of George III. I will ſpeak no more than the truth, this is the ſeaſon of enquiry, and patriotic curioſity ſhall examine the virtues and failings of the throne, for if a king *can do no wrong* in his actions, I am certain, I can do no wrong in ſpeaking of them.

Let the courtly caterpillars, who ſwarm about the ſanctorum of royalty, hear for once in their lives an humble individual echo the dictates of truth. Stubborn facts have ariſen, which will not bear the illuſions of ſophiſtry, and every intellectual quality of man combines to validate the evils, which for the laſt twenty years, have ſcourged the inhabitants of Britain.

In the year 1763, when the nation was releaſed from the war it was engaged in, upon his majeſty's acceſſion to the crown, and from which period alone

alone we can draw a juſt calculation of the bleſſings or evils of the preſent reign, the national debt amounted to one hundred and forty-eight millions; and the intereſt of it was not leſs than five millions annually: at the preſent period the national debt amounts to three hundred and thirty-one millions, five hundred thouſand pounds; and the intereſt of it is not leſs than twelve millions and one eighth: ſubſtract the difference, and we ſhall find an increaſe of one hundred and eighty-three millions in the grand debt, and an increaſe of ſeven millions in the ntereſt, which is yearly obtained from the profits of our agriculture and commerce. And now, when court paraſites ſpread through the uninformed part of the nation the boaſt of bleſſings derived from the preſent reign, let truth apply this uncontrovertible reply. The preſent reign has cauſed an addition to be made of one hundred and eighty-three millions to the national debt; and a ſubtraction of ſeven millions from the annual exertions of the ſtarving peaſant and the laborious mechanic: the preſent reign has been a reign of taxation; and the bleſſings derived from it—defeat, ruin, tyranny, and diſtreſs.

Never did a monarch aſcend the throne of his father with ſuch fair proſpects before him, as George III. After a ſucceſsful war carried on by able miniſters, a quorum of imbecile courtiers, favourites of his majeſty, concluded an indifferent

peace—

peace—however, the nation was proſperous. But from that period to the preſent, not a year has paſſed by without ſome internal diſſatisfaction, or external quarrel, from the reſignation of Lord Chatham to the perſecution of Mr. Wilkes. Through the American war, down to the preſent unfortunate period, the petitions of the people have been ſpurned with inſolence from the throne; and thrice has the obſtinacy of crown influence reſiſted the univerſal commands or requiſitions of the national will. The ſhores of the Atlantic have been ſtained with the cruelties of German pride, and the powers of Europe have continually been vexed into unneceſſary wars, by the childiſh duplicity of the Britiſh court; the Britiſh people have ſuffered miſery through patience; they will now learn the leſſons of juſtice, and neceſſity will be their tutor.

To what are we to attribute this immenſe expenditure of the national wealth, this continual diſturbance of the national peace—but to *ſomething* exiſting *ſomewhere*, hoſtile to the temper, ſituation, and principles of the country—to a power, foreign both in its origin and conduct—to an intereſt divided *from us* by the ocean, as well as by its practice. Would any Briton make Tippoo Saib his guardian or teſtator, when a brother Britain would fulfill the office? What difference is there between *Germany* and *India?*—they are both enſlaved.

All

All unneceſſary wars are ſyſtems of extravagance, invented by kings and miniſters, no matter which, to rob the people and enrich themſelves. The conteſt with America was begun by avarice, and carried on by ambition. The ſyſtem of taxation was ſo firmly rivetted on Britain, that certain perſons imagined they might alſo extend it acroſs the Atlantic, and open another ſource of tyrannical ſwindling, to be poured into the inſatiable abyſs of the treaſury. Happily for mankind, though not for Britain's oppreſſors, the project failed; and after thouſands of our couutrymen, and millions of our wealth, had been laviſhed at the deſire of hypocritical diſpoſitions, the King of England concluded a peace with Congreſs, and the Britiſh people paid the expences of a war, in which they had neither intereſt or will. The defence and quarrels of Havover have alſo drawn million after million from the pockets of our countrymen; and while we give an extravagant income, and a noble lodging to an Elector of Germany, we are obliged to repair and ſupport the crazy caſtle he has left, containing nothing but worm-eaten records of chivalry and honours, that are prudently ſmothered in duſt, to conceal the enormities which acquired them.

If the Britiſh court had tried an experiment to ſhew the deſpots of Europe how far the patience of the people might be abuſed, they could not have followed

followed a more regular plan of flagrant violence, and abuſive innovation. There is not a right in the Britiſh conſtitution which has not been attacked, nor a charter of the kingdom which has not been invaded; but rights and charters are not ſuch material concerns with the generality of unenlightened men, as thoſe monied affairs, with which the wealth and proſperity of the individual are more intimately connected. Men abſented from the Temple of Liberty neceſſarily reſort to that of Plutus for a ſhelter. In this caſe, the preſent reign has ſufficiently harraſſed this country. The laſt twenty years have been nothing but a continuation of loans and funding. The government's appetite has riſen in a duplicate proportion to national induſtry, and the drained purſes of the country will teſtify the fact.

Notwithſtanding the addition of 100,000l. per annum, to the Civil Liſt, and the immediate ſupply of 618,340l. in the year 1776, the demands upon this account have not decreaſed. A man, who in the country of his anceſtors could ſcarce ſupply the ragged centinels at his gate with half a loaf of ſtraw bread per day, muſt, in a land of ſtrangers and benefactors, continually beg grant after grant, make mendicaniſm the order of the crown, and, like the common ſtrollers of the ſtreet, make a long tale of a large and increaſing family, and obtain from national pity that relief which

ſhould

ſhould have ſubſiſted and comforted the national poor.

But beggary is not confined merely to the throne; it extends through the lower branches of what is termed the Royal Family; and *beſtow your charity* echoes from all corners and parts of this Germanic junto. Debts have been accumulated upon debts—merely to try how far the Britiſh parliament would make itſelf ſubſervient to the Britiſh Court. Men in and out of parliament have formed a pretended party round the Prince, for the purpoſe of encouraging and partaking his prodigality. The profligacy of the younger part of the court is an admirable inſtance of the abſolute domination of the Monarchy, for if the people were not deſtined to pay—the prince would never be ſo eager to ſpend, it is the certainty of a paymaſter to the piper, that alone induces him to chaunt the requiem of virtue and liberty. I have known inſtances of Negro Princes who have been whipped by their ſubjects for negligence or extravagance; and why the Britiſh Nation does not erect the ſcourge of cenſure and criminality over the poſteriors of an offending debauchee, I can aſſign no reaſon whatever, when a prince whines and cries to have his wild impudence ſupplied by the mother-like bounty of a nation, he deſerves the rod of correction, and the treatment of a child.*

* The letter to the Prince, which has received ſo much undeſerved

Pretended debts, and pretended wants are jokes too often repeated to continue the idea of their neceſſity; we may augur that the laſt payment is made, and the laſt party gratified, that will ever congregate around the purlieus of Pall Mall. A pauvre match from Germany has not been cloak enough for the ſhameful demand made upon the nation; the rapacity of the cheat, has ruined the trade of the ſwindler: the laſt deception has ripped up the golden gooſe, and the political Ideots have deſtroyed the ſource of continued fleecing, and blameable credulity. A finis will ſhortly be placed upon royal extravagance! and their own avarice will furniſh the oblivion of their knavery.

A curſory view of the ſupplies voted in different years, might ſhew the people, the increaſing burthens laid upon them, and the advance which has taken place in that revenue, which has always occaſioned a jealouſy between the friends of the Britiſh Conſtitution, and the adherents to the throne; however three ſtatements taken in three periods of war, with a comparative view of the Land and Sea Forces, voted (I will not ſay employed), may ſerve for the preſent, as an example of the extravagance of the preſent reign, whether occaſioned by an un-

undeſerved notice, is only a continuation of the Juggle; it abuſes a fool, to idolize a miniſterial rogue—and is a ſecond edition of profligacy—where ſophiſtry pays the demands of impudence.

neceſſary

neceſſary ſyſtem of warfare, externally, or by the internal avarice and deluſion of the governing powers.

		No. Seamen.	No. Landm.	Supply. £.	s.
In Geo. 2d.	A. D. 1757,	55,000	49,749	8,350,325	9
Geo. 3d.	— 1763,	30,000	56,360	13,522,039	14
Ditto,	— 1780,	85,000	35,000	21,196,496	12

Thus, from 1757 to 1780, a period of twenty-three years only, the yearly burthens of the nation have increaſed from eight to twenty-one millions, though the number of Land and Sea forces upon an average are nearly the ſame; an alarming increaſe has alſo taken place ſince the year 1780, notwithſtanding Mr. Pitt's plan for paying off the national Debt. In the laſt budget, when 100,000 Seamen were voted for the ſervice of the year, and when foreign ſubſidies, and foreign troops alike feaſted at the expence of Britain, the ſupplies amounted to £27,440,584. I can remember, in the reign of George II. that the whole ſupplies of the year were not exceeding two millions and an half, and yet in the reign of George III. twenty-eight millions are ſcarcely ſufficient to ſupply the neceſſities of ambition for the ſpace of twelve months. Whether this increaſe is occaſioned by wars or not, the imputation is equally the ſame; all wars are carried on and begun by the crown, and the crown is therefore the cauſe of thoſe miſeries which at this moment depreſs the energy of Bri-

tons, and generate diſcontent and ruin through the land.

Theſe are facts that apply alike to the patriot, and the monied alarmiſt; they are documents afforded us by government itſelf, and out of its own mouth it is accuſed. When nations murmur at oppreſſion, it is the practice of oppreſſors to ſophiſticate; they throw upon ſociety the evils which originate from governments, and denounce the order of life, becauſe, through their tyranny, man is almoſt weary of living. Ye courtly torturers of reality and principle, your ſway is nearly terminated. Whenever ſtateſmen fly to ſophiſtry, it is a proof that their actions are baſe, but the obſcurity of your defence, betrays the criminality of your deeds, the prieſt and the penſioner may twine round and round the ſubject as they pleaſe; reaſon proceeds in the ſtrait parallel of principle, and calculates at once the true menſuration of man's felicity.

CHAPTER II.

On the effects which the Extravagance of the preſent Reign has produced upon the people of England.

THE world in general derives its knowledge from the circumſtances which it feels; tyrannical extravagance is therefore its own enemy, becauſe it teaches mankind the neceſſity of being freed from it, and of inſtituting ſomething leſs expenſive to the community.

When we deſcribe evils, we ſhould alſo calculate their effect; a work is but half compleated which does not improve from the failings of another. Through the extravagance of the laſt thirty years, a new mode of thinking has been adopted, and a revolution has taken place in the faſhions of the mind. The Britiſh nation, once the adorer of prejudice, now invents queries with reſpect to the neceſſity of ſuch and ſuch inſtitutions, and pries into their uſes, and abuſes, with an inquiſitorial nicety. The Miniſterial expenditure of national credulity, has cauſed the intellectual appetite to riſe in a due proportion. The vaſt maſs of confidence, which once bore Miniſters through all their machinations, is at length wearied out, its powers and ſtrength are exhauſted, and nothing remains

but the pulſe of national repentance, feebly throbbing to the touch of Liberty.

Through the ſeveral adminiſtrations which have uſurped the direction of affairs, during the preſent reign, we find one continued ſyſtem of juggling prevalent; principle was the ſtudy of none, and the art of getting rich at the expence of the people, the practice of all: if the ſchemes of ſtate gamblers could ever have inſured them the univerſal deteſtation of mankind, I am ſure that a Bute! a Grafton! a North! a coalition miniſtry, or a crown miniſter of this day, will not want the artiſt's will, to engrave the Characters of obliquy upon their tombs; enough if, we are but convinced that they are gone, a nation ſhall dance their quietus to the ſounds of Freedom; a nation has received inſtructions from their practices, and a nation ſhall receive the convictions of principle, from the effects of their corruption. A better expoſition of tyranny could never have been given to us, than that which theſe tyrants themſelves have handed to us; the Philoſopher, in a remote corner, fearful of detection, and ſhrinking from the graſp of power, could never have informed the public ſo univerſally, as a North in conjunction with a Fox, ſhaking hands together, and burying the remembrance of diſſenting principles, in the unprincipled convenience of party, as a Pitt, amid the legal authorities of his country, abjuring the virtuous principles of his youth,

youth, and making miniſterial neceſſity the triumphant conqueror of his memory.

The preſent generation does not, like the generation which preceded it, depend on men, it applies to principles, and makes the heart its patriot. There was a period when a grand title, or an acquired name, were certain recommendations to popular favour, but when theſe are united to inconſiſtency, the public take away the falſe colours, which caſt a gloſſy appearance upon the reptile, and ſhew the Chamelion in his native hue. This is one glorious effect of miniſterial or royal extravagance (for they are equally the ſame), this is one index by which the nation diſcovers the individual intention and intereſt, from the vaſt volume of loyal pretence and hypocriſy, and quotes the action itſelf, to prove the venality of the man.

In as much as feeling is ſuperior to theory, in as much will the experience of the Britiſh nation, ſucceſsfully bear witneſs againſt the ſophiſtry of ſtateſmen and prieſts. The exceſs of this reign's *extravagance* has produced a univerſal famine, both in the ſubſiſtence, and the felicity of ſociety. And while the miniſter vociferates his own applauſe, and boaſts the advantages of his domination, the dumb dejection of the national ſpirit, the ſilent ſufferings of patient ignorance effectually anſwers his aſſertions, and contradicts his words. While

the gentleman deputed to his country ſeat, with a whole budget of ſophiſtry at his back, harangues the gapeing farmer, upon the bleſſings of the Conſtitution; the dearneſs of proviſions, and the unrewarded continuance of labour, oppoſe the nonſenſe only collected from the treaſury hirelings of the town. While the prieſt, from his ſacred roſtrum, mumbles out the inſpired dictates of five hundred pounds *per annum;* recommends peace and order, and talks about *giving to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's?* Hodge finding the tax-gatherer conveying away the produce of his labour, imagines their peace and order, to be rather expenſive, and finds, by peruſing the public debates, that the Cæſars of our country, by right of law, have nothing of their own, ſave what they beg from the charitable ſanhedrim of Weſtminſter. The nation, in a collective body, hearing the virtues of Kings and Princes bandied to and fro, like ſhuttlecocks, to keep the people gazing in the air, turn to the grand archives of profit and loſs, of principle and tyranny, and find benevolence blotted out by hypocriſy and royalty, and war expunging the characters of Liberty and life. Alas, too often the conviction of ſorrow, and ſuffering depreſſes the natural energy of man: would that the ſight of oppreſſion could always inſpire the reſolution of juſtice, then popular execration would be turned to univerſal triumph; and we ſhould not have to weep the ravages of ty-

rants,

rants, the jocund concord of emancipated nature, would urge us to dance upon their tombs.

We need not refer to a diſtant period in the page of modern hiſtory, nay, from the annals of the preſent reign we may diſcover the exceſs of flattery beſtowed upon the merit of nothing. It was once imagined one of the greateſt bleſſings this country ever enjoyed, that the Brunſwick family had ſucceeded to the throne; but experience has taught us another leſſon, and the dear bought felicity of ſuch an attainment, has palled or diſguſted the public appetite. John Bull will go to ſee a puppet-ſhow, but John Bull muſt firſt enjoy his pot of porter; whenever his induſtry will ſcarce ſupply him with the latter, the ſhow attracts no longer, and the ſhow-man will be ruined. Neceſſity always conquers folly. Kings and Courts, in fact, are no more than puppet-ſhows, a ſpecies of Royal wax-work, ſtuck up to attract popular attention, while the miniſterial emiſſaries of the grand jugglers pick the pockets of the infatuated world.

Court flattery then, which was once the order of the day, is not at this period admitted, even to the honours of the ſitting. The Britiſh nation no longer conſiders that acceſſion as a bleſſing, which has coſt them ſo much. Adulation has had its day; truth has been introduced by neceſſity, and the feelings of Engliſhmen have taught them principles, which their credulous habits, would not permit

them

them to imbibe before. The man of principle and virtue has been converted by the rapidity of reaſon; the man of money and convenience has been converted by the depreciation of his property.

But the extravagance of the preſent reign, has been productive of conſequences, which, for the preſent are pernicious in the extreme; it has corrupted our national integrity, when we contemplate the numerous crouds of dependants and hirelings, which continually haunt the orgies of the Great; their ſervility, their deceit, their deficiency of every manly virtue; we cannot but lament that oppreſſion, which has deprived them of the honeſt means of living; we cannot but deplore the prevalence of that temptation, which has rendered them aliens from the dignity of life. The miniſter bribes the courtier; the courtier convenes around him a dependant band of menials, place expectants, deſperadoes, and tradeſmen; theſe in their turn are the corrupted leaders of other circles, and thus the rammifications of corruption extend, and thus the genuine ſpirit of the nation is deſtroyed. Theſe are your ſpies and informers, a race of men, who too indolent for uſeful induſtry, rack themſelves from morning till night (to pleaſe their patrons, or entrap their fellow-creatures) in a more laborious manner than they could poſſibly endure, though they ſwept the ſtreets for a reſpectable ſubſiſtence. Ye candid highwaymen, how ſuperior are you in character to the wretch, who on the high road of life,

life, commands virtue to ſtop in the midſt of her journey, and robs ſociety of its confidence and principle.

This is one of the effects of the preſent reign; it is a ſyſtem which has originated during the laſt twenty years, and at this moment pervades the whole iſland; intereſt is made the guide of human conduct; and the queſtion is not now, are you qualified for ſuch employment or place, but what is your intereſt, and with whom are you connected? Every circumſtance in this reign has tended by imperceptible means, to make the people dependent upon the perſons above them; and financial extravagance has been the engine of tyrannical malevolence. A chain of influence has extended throughout the country, and it is the determined arm of popular reſentment alone that can break it.

If theſe evils are produced by the extravagance of the preſent reign, that extravagance will one day or other be the cauſe of national ruin. We cannot ſupport the preſent exceſs of taxation, the Britiſh people have not reſources ſufficient to bear oppreſſion, which only grows heavier by duration; and profligacy, which encreaſes in a due ratio with our patience. Whenever the government is not believed, the government will be deſpiſed, wherever government lacks the coincidence of the people, its proſperity is at an end. Britain has ſuffered from century to century, through the deluſion of

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its governors. The awakened attention of the country now looks forward to other agents for better times.

If there is an effect of this extravagance yet unmentioned, it is one which patriotic prudence muſt yet conceal in ſecrecy; let the heart think for itſelf; ruin is often times the medium of liberty; tyrants poſſeſs nó where ſuch an inveterate enemy, as their own miſconduct. When a poſſeſſor of an eſtate ſquanders it heedleſsly among the diſſolute, it generally happens, that the legal heirs obtain it from the graſp of the abandoned, and the property devolves on perſons, who will improve and enjoy it, for the advantage of themſelves and the world. When princes gamble with the gifts of their people, the people ſhould ſnatch the national property from the power of the gameſter, and not permit the *black legs of royalty*, to ſtake the felicity of man againſt their unprofitable ambition. If ever a King ſhould ſo far forget the bounty of the people, who placed him on his throne, as to make their credulity the means of his extravagance, and their induſtry the ſupply of his obſtinacy and ambition, that King wherever he may exiſt or reign, will one day or other find public juſtice ſucceed public forbearance, and the ſanctity of the throne will be no barrier to the vengeance of an inſulted nation. Happy for the ſceptered individual, if pity for the man ſhould ſuperſede the anger created by the evils of his ſituation.

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.

Some Explanation of the wretched ſtate to which the imprudent forbearance of the People, and the Extravagance of Miniſters, has reduced the Britiſh Nation.

A COMMERCIAL bankruptcy! a national famine! and an unavoidable Revolution! are the effects which originate from Miniſterial profligacy and error!—let us conſider them.

Politicians in general proceed upon wrong calculations, with reſpect to commercial proſperity—emulous of exceeding each other in the art of national eulogium, they are led away by the appearance, rather than guided by the reality of ſucceſs; and they imagine that the quantity of export and import conſtitutes a ſecure increaſe of our traffic, without reflecting, whether that quantity is productive of real benefit; and formed on a ſecure baſis. A nation may become the carriers of Europe, but if the people derive no benefit from that univerſal intercourſe—it is only a ſwelling catalogue of unprofitable labour, and ruin and induſtry go hand in hand.

If England were well governed, it would be the market of the world. I do not ſay, that the increaſe

creaſe of commerce is the cauſe of its failure—no—but whenever commerce is ruinouſly conducted, then in proportion as the ſyſtem is enlarged, the deſtruction muſt alſo increaſe. When the merchant finds upon impartial reflection, that one half his profits go to ſupply the exigencies of what is term-ed government, he will then find the reaſon, why cargoe after cargoe is unladen, and yet why ſo ſmall a portion of its benefits accrue to the individual that imported it. In Britain, numerous articles of the firſt conſequence can be exported again, at a much greater profit, than if they were retained in the country; this deprives the nation of the advan-tages of its own commerce, and the Britiſh ſailors labour for the convenience of foreigners. The high duties, impoſts and cuſtoms, make Britain only a ſieve, where every thing that is valuable paſſes through, and leaves nothing behind but the refuſe and chaff. Spain imagined by like means to make herſelf rich, by the poſſeſſion of South America, but Spain was only the medium by which the remainder of Europe obtained the fruits of her exertions; the parallel is appoſite—Britain under-takes to explore every corner of the ocean, and yet through cuſtoms, duties, and impoſts, other na-tions open their ports, and receive the advantages of her univerſal traffic. Goods and commodities are received into our warehouſes, and re-ſhiped to foreign parts; the real induſtry of commerce juſt dawns upon this boaſted mart of Europe, and ſcared

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by its exactions, fails to a land, more willing to reward its labours.

The landed property of a nation cannot be productive of much revenue, becauſe it produces little more than is neceſſary for the immediate ſuſtenance of man; it is commerce, that ſupports the exorbitant income of the Britiſh Government. The people are ſlaves, who labour and toil for a certain pittance of exiſtence, while government exact the fruits of their induſtry. Commerce, under the preſent ſyſtem of affairs, is no more than a ſyſtem of hulks, where the convicts of tyranny weary out their lives and receive no benefit from their exertions; it is no difference to the individual whether an exciſe duty, or a farmer-general robs him of his property. In commercial affairs—duties, cuſtoms, and exactions are national piracies, upon the univerſal privilege of trade.

In ſuperficially ſurveying the Britiſh traffic, we may be led to admire its extent, but in this day, all capitals are nominal, they are dependent upon credit, and the national commerce ſtands upon a baſis, as flimſy as the paper which ſupplies the want of a ſterling medium. A merchant runs upon truſt for all his concerns, and ſcarce a man that ſtruts upon the Exchange, but depends upon a quick return, for the ſafety of his credit, and the repayment of the property he has borrowed. The

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ſolid ſtability of the Britiſh merchant is no more. Credit is the foundation of that trade, which ſhould be founded on its own ſecurity; and national miſery will ruin that commerce, which expands like a bubble—to burſt into nothing.

Becauſe government by duties, and cuſtoms, reaps the ſolid advantages of commerce, the merchant is obliged to carry it on, upon a ſyſtem of credit; that profit which would enable him to obtain a real capital and traffic independently, being ſeized by the ruling powers: he is obliged to recur to unſtable meaſures, and to introduce into the fair ledger of trade, a long account of credit and intereſt. Whenever by a national revolution that credit is deſtroyed, the whole ſyſtem is diſ-jointed, and proſperity is flown. There may be a number of veſſels and ſeaman, but the firſt, unleſs the merchant be reſpectably ſupported, will rot uſeleſs burthens upon our ſhores, and the latter become the victims of want, and the ſolicitors of public charity.

Commerce ſhould be as free as the ocean on which it travels; all reſtraints introduce ruin, and all duties, cuſtoms, and exciſes, are nothing more than tyranny paſſing a veto upon the proſperity of trade. Kings can place no turn-pikes on the ſea, they therefore erect their impoſts in our national ports, and make us pay that at home, which they could

could never exact upon the wide boſom of the main. Britain has ſpent as much to terminate ſmuggling as ſhe has gained by her multitude of cuſtoms and exciſe-laws; the remedy was worſe than the diſeaſe, and it is well if the nation is not ruined by the experiment.

But the nation is reduced to a ſituation, which far excels the moſt animated writer to deſcribe. Famine is an evil which our governors muſt immediately remedy—hunger is not a grievance which the contempt of tyrants may adjourn from day to day, the neceſſaries of life muſt be obtained, or man will be unable to bear with the oppreſſion, which his indolence would otherwiſe neglect to notice.

This dreadful miſery is to be derived alone from the wickedneſs of the preſent miniſtry; it is an evil which can alone be cauſed by an exportation of our national produce, and a deficiency in the returns of commerce—perhaps the Chouans and the rebels of Vendee are a ſpecies of beings, more valuable than the people of Britain. The deſpicable emigrants are to be ſupplied before the Engliſh peaſant, and foreign blood-hunters are to receive the natural ſupport of our own poor—admirable judgment of Pitt!—noble ſpeculations of royaliſm! Ye teach the treachery of courts, and convert the ſtarving victims of ſlavery to the chearful hopes of liberty.

But this is a famine likely to continue and increaſe, unleſs national vengeance burſt at once, and make tyranny its food. Throughout Europe the ſame ſcarcity extends; and unleſs the ſoldier be returned to his cottage and plough, the earth will remain uncultivated, and man unfed. Circumſtances are come to a criſis—kings muſt either diſband their armies, or elſe the famine, which thoſe armies produce, will prove the compreſſing ſignal of univerſal revolution; and the inſtruments of deſpotiſm becoming its victims, will turn indignant on their maſters, and make neceſſity the plea of their rebellion.

Three millions of active men deducted from the agricultural labour of Europe, and collected together in large and idle bodies, have in ſome meaſure cauſed the univerſal ſcarcity. Poland divided and dividing, deſolated and ravaged, now requires that aſſiſtance from other nations which ſhe once diſtributed as the granary of Europe. It is not likely that kings will diſband their armies—it is not likely that Ruſſia and Pruſſia will reſign their booty; and yet theſe being the cauſes of famine, will continue and increaſe the evil, till ſtarvation operates as an univerſal reſtorative, and nature herſelf, neglected and oppreſſed, ſounds the Tocſin of Revolution and Revenge.

In Britain, the monarch will not diſband his fencibles

fencibles and aſſociations, they muſt remain as guardians of property, till property and plenty are conſumed by the very means intended to preſerve them. This war of *juſtice and neceſſity* will not be diſcontinued, till *juſtice* becomes renewed, and *neceſſity* occaſions the renovation. The government, the rich, and the luxurious, may in vain ſtudy their imbecile projects of ſupply—nature, robbed of the peaſants, who cultivate her increaſe, will not attend to the echoes of tavern reſolutions; and man, robbed of his ſuſtenance, cannot but follow the reſentful dictates of his heart.

The expences of the Britiſh government have deprived the merchant of that ſolid dependance which alone can ſecure the proſperity of commerce. The imprudence of the Britiſh government has occaſioned that ſcarcity of neceſſaries which alone can rouſe the maſs of man to reſentful action; and both theſe evils cauſe that revolutionary temper in the kingdom, which alone can originate from the oppreſſive conduct of the governors. Man loves reſt, and he can never be ſpurred into action, ſave when his neceſſities oblige him. But at this period ſluggiſh inanity is at an end—hunger and ruin are the agitators of the day—and the barrenneſs of nature aggravates the ſtorm.

The exorbitant taxes of the country firſt ſapped

the reſpectable baſis of commerce—the war has occaſioned a dearth of proviſions; theſe will ſoon compleat the work of ruin, and the neceſſity of a revolution becomes every day more and more conſpicuous. Revolutionary principles can never be prevalent but from a conviction that they are neceſſary; and thus we always form a judgment of the ſituation of a country, by the impartial exceſs of popular opinion. Men reaſon from their feelings, and ſpeak from what they ſee. The mechanic feels that it is requiſite to claim an advance upon his labour, becauſe his weekly wages will not ſupply his weekly wants. And a nation is convinced that a change of government is neceſſary, becauſe a continuation of its evils can only increaſe the miſeries at preſent complained of. National opinion is the repreſentative of national ſituations; and principles only legiſlate what the exiſting circumſtances direct. When men revile the idea of theoretical opinions, let them remember, that all theory is the production of feeling, and that feeling is the experience of exiſting objects. Whenever the man of pounds, ſhillings, and pence, regards all opinion as viſionary, let him reflect, that thoſe opinions were firſt generated by the ſcarcity of money or proviſions, and that bodily feeling firſt ſtampt the ſenſation upon the mind.

It were well if ſome mediated courſe of reform could preclude the violence of a revolution; but

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to ſuch a deſirable event the obſtinacy of our governors is an inſurmountable obſtacle. The nation is reduced to the deſperate neceſſity of chuſing one of two extremes, no mild medium will be allowed by miniſterial influence. But the event is near at hand, every moment teems with new corroborations of the fact. And in proportion as time proceeds, the expected day of national retribution approaches. To that day and circumſtance we look forward with heſitating hope! The conſequence of the ſtruggle appals the boldeſt conjecture; and the uncertainty of the proſpect dims the penetration of the politician. However the certainty of its arrival moves the heart with trembling rapture, and the national wiſh throbs forward to the conflict, unanimouſly reſolved to conquer, or to die.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Means of recovering National Liberty and Proſperity—with Reflections on the puſillanimous Conduct of paſſive Citizens.

HAVING ſtated the extravagance of the preſent reign, diſcuſſed its effects, and deſcribed the ſtate of our country, let us conſider the means of obtaining redreſs and freedom.

But firſt let me addreſs thoſe idle members of ſociety, who playing truant from the active duties of life, will yet doubt whether there exiſt any grievance at all, will ſtill enquire—What are the evils you complain of, and what can you require?

The evils we complain of are, *ruin*, *famine*, and *war*—and our requiſitions are, *reform! liberty*, and *peace*. Have you, indolent partakers of the luxuries of wealth, experienced or ſeen the miſeries of poverty? When you applaud and approve *war*, *taxation* and *corruption*, have you loſt a parent, a brother, or a friend, by the aſſaſſinating ſword of national conteſt? have you ſeen the tax-gatherer enter your houſe, like a ruffian, and rob you of the little property your induſtry acquired?—have you been wreſted from your family and relatives, to ſtarve in a priſon, for letting

letting the dictates of your hearts ſlip from your lips?—if you have ſeen theſe miſeries, and yet can feel no emotions ſtruggle in your breaſt, you have a heart only fit to ſtudy the polluted annals of a court: if you live in Britain, and have not ſeen them, you have made your virtues the captives of your indolence, and committed ſuicide upon the delegated intellect of life.

Wherever tyranny occaſions ſorrow, it is the duty of the world to ſympathize. However luxurious and eaſy your ſituation, it is the peaſant that makes it ſo: nature never made him your inferior, it is only the convenience of ſociety that makes him ſubmit; and when that convenience is no more, his ſubmiſſion will likewiſe terminate, and the moment of his independence is the finis of your gentility. Convinced that ruin will be the production of the preſent meaſures, will you prolong thoſe meaſures, and join partners with deſtruction? or will you, at leaſt, acknowledging that ſuch miſeries do exiſt, decline the ungenerous practice of inſulting and oppoſing the oppreſſed. In this age man regiſters his feelings, and the long liſt of his injuries will one day or other be laid on the altar of juſtice. When a *royal junto* are ſcattered abroad upon the earth they peſter, and when a *crowned cormorant* goes feaſting to the ſcaffold, you can feel their ſorrows, you can pity their deceaſe and exile—and ſhall you not be rouſed into

manly vengeance, when thouſands fall beneath the ſword of unneceſſary war, and when virtue and happineſs are baniſhed from the grand ſociety of man.

Wealth may inſtil into man that lethargy which unnerves the reſolution of the mind; a poſſeſſion of property may render the idea of loſing it terrible, and for that reaſon, one half the Britiſh nation are content to reſign one half of their poſſeſſions to preſerve the reſt: but it is not the intention of reformers in the leaſt to invade private property; it is their wiſh to make property the real and ſacred poſſeſſion of the individual, and not to be drained through legal robberies, for the unneceſſary demands of a corrupt and uſeleſs government. Chuſe, ye monied alarmiſts, whether you would have your wealth the ſacred depoſit of an individual, ſacred to his own uſe, and the bleſſings of private ſociety, or whether ye would ſtill drain your purſes, and forfeit half your income, to ſupport the lingering evils of deſpotiſm, and prolong the expiring dotage of tyranny.

Perhaps, emulous to preſerve that haughty ſuperiority over the reſidue of man, which corrupt governments always attach to wealth, you may ſhudder at the idea of deriving no political advantage from its poſſeſſion; but neceſſity, if not principle, will oblige you to mingle with all men as your brethren. The will of the majority *ſhatters*

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the egg-ſhell fabric of ariſtocracy into nothing, and the man, ſelecting himſelf as a choſen one of ſociety, will be obligated to partake of the univerſal ſociality of the world, and become a citizen of life. I know not what feelings ariſtocrats may poſſeſs, but, to me, nothing is ſo delightful as the congenial participation of all ſentiment and degree, to behold my fellow beings ſpeak to me as a man, not as a ſlave, and to enjoy, at nature's table, the delicious banquet of free intercourſe and unbiaſſed thought. I know of no one ſo miſerable as the man whom pride and privilege ſhut out from the ſociety of man; he erects for himſelf a dungeon, and through the bars of his own prejudice ſighs for the common felicity of life.

I have explained the cauſes of ruin and ſcarcity, and their effects, let us at laſt turn our thoughts towards the emancipation of Britain, and the means by which we may effect it.

When governments verge towards their decline it is the duty of man to renew them; and the men who proſecute reformers, repreſent, to my imagination, an old miſer, who having amaſſed riches through an old building, ſnarls at every one who would repair his manſion, or deſcribe to him the rotten walls juſt tottering into ruin. But when governors are deaf, we ſhould ſpeak to the people. The Britiſh nation can alone be the medium of renova-

renovation, and the origin of reform, for *miniſters and miniſter-makers* have ſo often juggled us with hypocritical deluſion, that it is our duty as men, to do juſtice to the unſullied character of the nation, and turn the ſneer of malevolence into the terror of guilt, receiving from the people the deſert of its crimes.

It is a plain fact, that the Britiſh people can depend on no one but themſelves. Patriots are too unſtable a ſpecies of things to truſt reform with, let the grand body of the nation act for itſelf; the adminiſtration of the affairs of freedom ſhould never be delegated to any individual: it is the general concern of the country, and the country is always adequate to judge of its own intereſts; let Britons but follow the unbiaſſed tendency of their own feelings, and the ſenſe of the country will be reciprocally the ſame.

By aſſociation our intereſts are diſcovered, and our intentions made known; by aſſociation, the general body of the people know each others tempers and wiſhes, and the national will is collected and defined; by aſſociation corruption and tyranny are diſcovered, diſcuſſed, and defeated. All political ſocieties are friendly to liberty, becauſe liberty always triumphs in the aſſembled diſcuſſions of men, and it is to political ſociety alone, that we ſhall ever direct our attention for an effectual remedy

medy to the evils we complain of; in popular aſſemblies, the miniſters of the day will find their greateſt enemy ſtart forth, namely, Truth—the colliſion of argument, clears away the ariſtocratical filth which may have gathered on the mind, and the heart of man partaking the feelings of others, is warmed into energy, and acquires a ſenſation adapted to all the dictates of patriotiſm.

Popular ſocieties alone can organize public feeling, and make the proſperity of reform ſecure, they give a body and a force to the national will, and conduct the wiſhes of the people in their proper channel; it is by ſuch affiliations alone, that we can ever make virtue and liberty the ſtandard of our government; and it is as much the duty of the citizen to engage in ſuch ſocieties as it is to bear liberty in his heart, for theſe are the academies, where principle, virtue, and nature act as tutors, and make life's felicity the intent of their tuition.

Were fifty thouſand men engaged in one ſociety, their reſolution could effect any thing—it would be a phalanx ſuperior to all the efforts of corruption. This is the only method by which the national wiſh can be collected and delivered to the government. While the country preſerves its peace and patience, this is the only progreſſive path which preſents itſelf to our view. There are ſocieties, but they are yet in their infancy, their principles are undigeſted, and

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their intentions disjointed by the confuſion occaſioned by a multiplicity of unneceſſary regulations; when theſe men conduct themſelves on a plain and ſimple plan, their efforts will be ſucceſsful—the baſis of an univerſal political aſſociation is already founded, and it only requires the prudence of the patriot to carry the intended ſtructure into effect. But when the repeated ſolicitations of an oppreſſed people are of no avail—let us enquire what conduct ſuch ſocieties ſhould purſue.

Whenever a government acts contrary to the wiſhes of a people, the people ſhould firſt ſtrip it of the powers they have entruſted it with, and then turn it out of office with contempt; but it too often happens that the power which that government may enjoy, pretends to act independently of the people, and refuſes to obey their commands—armies are the weapons of monarchs, we ſhould make them the ſhields of the people—whenever a king, holding his authority by certain reſtrictions, violates thoſe reſtrictions, the army belongs to him no longer, and every ſoldier is abſolved from his oath. Oaths are in themſelves abſurdities, for nothing can be ſo ridiculous as to engage to ſupport a man through all his life, whether he act conſiſtently with his duties or not.

When the laſt dreadful exigence obliges the nation to aſſume an active poſture, let miniſters apply

ply the evil to their conduct, they will have called the people to arms, and rung the tocsin of rebellion through the land. But lest the army should be tempted to act in a hostile manner to peaceable societies, let the means of knowledge, and the benefit of reform, be also extended to the military. It is the pleasure of tyrants to separate the soldier from his countrymen, and it has been the error of the people, to treat the soldier with contempt and violence—let these systems of ruinous aggravation be known no longer—let us associate with our brethren in arms—and the universal impulse of truth will unite the soldier, the peasant, the mechanic, and the gentleman, in one patriotic policy, and congregate all orders and descriptions into a civic mass of indivisible reform.

To restore national liberty, and revive the wonted prosperity of our country, we should associate in popular societies, and endeavour to instil knowledge and virtue in the ignorant, but more particularly among the military, these being the men, on whose credulity and delusion, the partisans of corruption principally depend. These are the most effectual means of introducing reform and liberty—and it is the duty of every patriot to impart that to another, which nature has first imparted to him; the distribution of knowledge is the first duty of man, it is an obligation coeval with our birth, for we have received from others that which others should re-

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ceive from us; it is an exchange deſcending through all generations, of which nature is the original author. Let us conſult the grand mind of the univerſe, and ſay, is it not better that one particle of that general intellect ſhould improve another, that tyranny may play truant from the regions of life, and diſtreſs become a ſtranger, forgotten in the univerſal republic of man.

THE CONCLUSION.

AFTER a ſtatement of the cauſes of our preſent diſtreſs and calamity, after a deſcription of their effects, and a view of the only means by which we can recover liberty and proſperity, I ſhall cloſe the work by a ſhort deſcription of the ſtate of the world in general.

The firſt power in Europe will always be France as long as ſhe can preſerve the extent of her dominions, ſituated like a ſquare in the very centre of civilization, ſhe has given an example which her neighbours cannot but imitate—Flanders and Holland are already revolutionized—Britain is on the criſis either of deſpotiſm or liberty—the ariſtocracy of Switzerland tremble for their ſafety—the petty princes of Germany are already on the trip, and Spain is at this moment engaged with Frenchmen only to learn the principles of nature, and the value of being free. The European world has been electrified by the univerſal fluid of nature's liberty—and it ſtarts, as yet unconſcious of the power that ſhakes it. The tocſin has once been ſounded to the world, and man univerſally enquires the cauſe of the alarm.

But

But Liberty has much to perform. Auſtria, Pruſſia, and Ruſſia, the three leading powers in Europe, are yet involved in the moſt ſlaviſh ignorance, and are three centuries behind the reſt of Europe in knowledge and civilization. Sweden and Denmark, through their commerce, are ſomewhat more enlightened; Poland is obſolete, and only affords us a melancholy inſtance, that when freedom approaches the borders of deſpotiſm, it is made a pretext for deſpots to ſeize upon its territories, and extend their ſyſtems of ſlavery—in ſhort, Europe at this moment preſents a motley multitude of character and principles, in the diſconnection of which liberty can alone hope for ſucceſs.

But when man begins to think, it is impoſſible to calculate the progreſs of his powers, from the cold courſe of unenlightened ages; when a man is releaſed from a burthen, you may know the exact proportion of his perſon, but when he is depreſſed by ſlaviſh toil and labour, your picture will be as deformed and odious as the figure from which you have taken it. We cannot pretend to ſay what man will be, from what he is—he univerſally aſſumes a new complexion, and ſtands upon a novel baſis—the tenor of his character is altering every day—he wonders himſelf at the changes he beholds—and riſes from his ſlavery into thought and freedom, with as much admiration and pleaſure, as if the

the blind, were at once to diſcern nature in its mid-day radiance, and life in its meridian of joy.

To thee, Liberty, has this age dedicated its labours—America has acknowledged thee to be her patron; Europe is now ringing with thy conqueſts; Africa receiving thy leſſons from her captured ſons, ſhall follow them, and the ſlave of European luxury ſhall become the herald of African emancipation. In Aſia, an oppreſſed prince, and a tortured people, ſhall one day or other exterminate a horde of lawleſs uſurpers, and the world univerſally becoming thy children, ſhall return thee, the beſt homage of their gratitude, induſtry and peace.

Perhaps this picture may diſguſt the old politician—but it is not an unlikely one. Britain at this moment ſeizes on American property, and the conteſt which this violation of treaties may provoke, will in all probability unite to the congreſs both Canada and the Weſt Indies; the emancipated ſlaves, will, doubtleſs, ſome of them return to their country, and ſpread among thoſe hordes of wandering Africans, the firſt rude principles of freedom; and in Aſia, the miſeries which the natives ſuffer under a certain European power, will, combined with the aſſiſtance of France, produce the deſtruction of the one, and the introduction of the principles practiſed by the other. In Europe, the ſcenes lately exhibited, prove beyond doubt, the progreſs of ameliorating freedom; and even the diſtant throne of the imperious Catherine may be ſub-

verted before another century ſhall have paſſed by in lingering forbearance. It is not to this or that man, country or degree, that the preſent ſcene of wonders are confined—a grand conſpiracy is generated through the whole fabric of ſociety, every country has its peculiar mode of executing the univerſal plan, their means may differ, but their principles and effects are one and the ſame.

Britain, amid the convulſion of empires, may riſe triumphant, and be proſperous, though the world beſide may be an univerſal ſcene of war and miſery, provided, that ſevered from foreign intereſts, ſhe poſſeſſes liberty herſelf, and allows the liberty of others—but if the preſent ſcene is continued, if Hanover is ſtill to be the bone of contention, if corruption is ſtill to ſupply that contention with taxes wreſted from the induſtrious and the poor—then our commerce and our agriculture only prove that the avarice of our government may increaſe, and the ſituation of the people remain eternally the ſame. Let the ardour of the nation for one moment be exerted with reſolution, let Britons reſume the characters of their anceſtry, if they know nothing of new principles, even the ſpirit of a Cromwell would be preferable to modern puſillanimity, and it would be better to have one protector, than five hundred corrupted aſſociates, who oppreſs by law, and make our conſtitution the medium of their corruption.

APPEN-

APPENDIX.

THIS Work has not appeared ſo ſoon as was expected, through a preſſure of circumſtances, though the contents are not only applicable to the preſent moment, but the events which have ariſen on the page of time, have corroborated every aſſertion contained in the foregoing ſheets. The propheſy of ruin has been fulfilled—the miſery foretold has advanced with more rapid ſtrides than even the warmeſt imagination could predict—and revolution has acquired a celebrity, unequalled in the annals of the world.

The increaſe of oppreſſion is always the invitation of liberty; it is a political defiance which calls the parties ſooner to the combat. America was deprived of her property before ſhe was rouſed to aſſert her independence. The parliaments of Paris and Brittany were arreſted and ſuſpended from their functions before the conſtituent aſſembly aſſumed a power effectually its own. And may we not augur with propriety, that the deprivation of the laſt of our liberties in this country will produce the ſame effect. Yes—yes, the Britiſh miniſtry have ſhel-

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tered themſelves beneath a Convention Bill, becauſe they ſaw the dangers ſurrounding them, and their retreat is the ſignal of an approaching ſtorm.

As an individual, I am not alarmed at their preſent proceedings, becauſe any man uſed to ſearch one degree farther than the reſt, will diſcern in the very womb of theſe times, the glorious birth-day of Triumphant Liberty. To ſtruggle violently againſt an evil, is to acknowledge its exiſting power; and the patriots of Britain cannot have a better proof of their force, than the eager temerity with which the tyrants of this country proceed to practiſe their laſt meaſure againſt the laſt of our rights; but the ſtruggle will be violent: the patient murmurs of the people are like the growling of a bear, which only retires to recoil. Let miniſters beware—when the ſocial participation of opinion is impeded, the dagger of the aſſaſſin too often uſurps the office of reaſon, and the arm dictates what the heart is forbid to utter. You may as well preſume to curb the vital ſtream of life that ruſhes in the veins, as to impede the free exerciſe of expreſſion, which in fact is the circulating ſpirit of human felicity—and the only bleſſing that feeds and ſaturates the heart of life.

What do I ſee around me? and in what country do I live? Where is my ſocial friend? and where

where the genuine ſentiments that iſſued rom his heart? I ſee the fearful ſhrug, the ſilent geſture, and all the dreadful ſilence which figures forth a ſlave unable to enjoy his being: yet I can alſo perceive a wiſhful confidence, that *ſomething will be done;* and in the utmoſt paroxyſm of terror, his looks ſpeak vengeance, and his eye beams liberty. Deteſted monſters! inhuman parricides of nature's faculties! The very means of tyranny are its downfall! for you have driven us from the temples of Reaſon and Juſtice—it is your fault if we open the gates of Janus, and ſound the war-hoop of retribution.

No government will undertake a raſh meaſure, provided ſafer means would enſure a ſimilar ſucceſs. The Convention Bill is a proof that the government have reaſon, juſtice, and numbers againſt them; and their laſt—laſt ſtruggle is that gaſp of horror, which indicates the actual diſſolution of their ſyſtem. All that the people of Great Britain have to do—is not to be frightened—to ſtand to their own wiſhes—and the day will be their own.

Nations are too often appalled with terror, when on the very eve of obtaining the liberties they ſtruggled for, without reflecting, that all concuſſions are moſt violent when near their end. Let

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us be tranquil—yet resolute—calm and determined. And the late machinations of a perfidious ministry will only accelerate the effect of justice, and emancipate in total the insulted inhabitants of Britain.

FINIS.